(b) The reasons for decline in foreign tourist traffic to India during the years 2001 and 2002, are the September 11 incident in the USA, war in Afghanistan, terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament, tension on the Indo-Pak border and the travel advisories issued by a number of foreign Governments. However, the tourist traffic to India has increased during the years 2003 and 2004 despite a recession of about 1 % in the tourist traffic around the world during the year 2003.

(c) and (d) India is a long haul destination and 83% of the tourist traffic arrives by air. This makes India a more expensive destination. In order to make India a competitive destination, from time to time the Ministry takes up with the concerned Central and State agencies for liberalization of air access, rationalization of taxes, reduction in the multiplicity and rates of taxes, etc. on accommodation, transport and on other facilities being used by the tourists.

Development of religious tourist spots

†551. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of tourist spots in the country which have been developed, if any, as religious tourist spots, State-wise; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM(SHRIMATI RENUKACHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Development of tourist/pilgrim places is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/UT Administrations. However, the Ministry of Tourism also sanctions development projecs at tourist/pilgrim sites of national and international importance in various States/UTs in consultation with them. Some major development projects have been sanctioned at Kurkshetra, Haridwar/Rishikesh, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Puri, Somnath etc. during the 10th Plan so far.

Special tourism zone in Kerala

552. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to slate: (a) whether Government have received a proposal for a Special tourism zone in Kerala;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by Government on the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OFTOURISM(SHRIMATI RENUKACHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) Aconcept proposal has been received in the Ministry of Tourism from State Govt, of Kerala for establishment of Tourism Special Economic Zone in Veli-Kovalam-Poovar area. However, there is no scheme in the Ministry of Tourism for establishment of such zones.

Pending Tourism Projects

553. SHRIA.VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of projects for the development of tourism pending for clearance;

(b) the details of the proposals, State-wise and project-wise; and

(c) the number of projects cleared by Government during the last three years, State-wise and project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKACHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Tourism projects are sanctioned in consultation with the State Govts/UT Administrations subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priority. This is an on going process.

(c) State-wise details of projects sanctioned during the last 3 years are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

State-wise Tourism projects sanctioned and Funds Released during the Last Three Years (2001-02,2002-03 *and*2003-04;

(Rs. in Lakhs)

s. No.	State/UT	No. of Projects Sanctioned	Amt. Sanctioned	Amt. Released
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Andhra Pradesh	14	1621.85	1221.20
2.	Assam	19	1479.09	1127.59